

COMBINATION AWARD BASE AND CONCEALED STORAGE CONTAINER DEVICE

Be it known that I, Terri Lynn Dewey, residing at 14
5 Springhouse Court Southwest, Cartersville, Georgia, 30120, a
citizen of the United States, have invented certain new and
useful improvements in a Combination Award Base and Concealed
Storage Container Device of which the following is a
specification.

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CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

To the full extent permitted by law, the present Patent
15 Cooperation Treaty Application claims priority to and the
benefit of United States Provisional patent application entitled
"Award Bases Configured as Containers/Boxes," filed on February
2, 2004, having assigned Serial No. 60/541,383.

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to awards and
trophies and, more specifically, to an award base device for
supporting a selected decorative award, wherein a substantially
25 disguised internal compartment enables concealed storage of
selected memorabilia within the base device, thereby retaining
all of the aesthetic pleasure of a traditional trophy while also
enabling some utilitarian benefit therefrom.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

As is well known and understood, people of all ages like to receive awards and trophies. There are many different types of trophies, but they are essentially limited to functioning as purely aesthetic objects and do not serve any practical purpose. Generally, trophies are displayed on shelves and/or stored in cabinets, or eventually away in boxes. Further, with the increasing trend toward encouraging youngsters through the granting of participation awards to each individual, in addition to specialized performance awards, the number of trophies and/or awards collected by each individual, from childhood to adulthood, can be staggering. That is, often participation awards are considered a nuisance because they are awarded every season, serve no practical function, take up space and collect dust.

Consequently, individuals tasked with the duty to select and order such participations awards, namely parents and coaches of older players, often refuse to purchase participation trophy awards in favor of more useful items, such as T-shirts and water bottles. Perhaps in response to this view, some efforts have been made to impart some utilitarian aspects to trophies. For example, combining a lamp and trophy into a single unit has been suggested. Such a combination, however, disadvantageously detracts from the long-standing, desired traditional appearance of trophies. Others have proposed new trophy styles wherein a

ball holder, flag display case, or medallion holder functions to hold and display a given article, whereby the stored article essentially functions as the decorative trophy. These styles are effective for their limited uses, however, fail to offer a
5 solution to those desiring a useful yet traditional trophy cup, figure, statue, and the like.

Another dilemma faced by many with ongoing involvement in sports or other extracurricular activities is the accumulation
10 of various types of memorabilia, such as pins and buttons, ribbons, ticket stubs and the like. Collecting such items for future reminiscing is enjoyable, but unfortunately, organization of such souvenirs is often very time intensive. Additionally, many types of collectable memorabilia are not suitable for
15 placement into a scrapbook-type format and thus end up, unsorted and potentially damaged, in boxes, bags or among other accumulations of event artifacts.

Therefore, it is readily apparent that there is a need for
20 a device for displaying a trophy figure, cup, statue, or the like in a traditional manner upon a base, wherein a hidden internal compartment enables storage of award items, as well as other objects of memorabilia, in the base without altering the trophy's basic appeal in any way, thereby enhancing the
25 perceived value of trophies by enabling them with a practical function that is useful throughout the home or office, and changing what is viewed as the liability of a static trophy into

the asset of a container, thus preventing the above-discussed disadvantages.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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Briefly described, in a preferred embodiment, the present invention overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages and meets the recognized need for such a combination award base and concealed storage container device by providing a base device
10 for supporting a selected decorative award, wherein a substantially disguised internal compartment enables concealed storage of selected memorabilia within the base device, thereby retaining all of the aesthetic pleasure of a traditional trophy while also enabling some utilitarian benefit therefrom.

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According to its major aspects and broadly stated, the present invention is a *device for storing and containing award objects, as well as other items, in one convenient location, the base of an award/trophy.*

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More specifically, the present invention in its preferred form is a freestanding award, wherein the *supporting base unit is configured as a container/box.* The preferred base has a top or lid that serves as a mount for the award display, and serves
25 as an accesspoint to an internal storage compartment. Further, the top or lid is preferably recessed, wherein the compartment feature remains substantially disguised, thus retaining all of

the aesthetic pleasure of a traditional trophy while also enabling some utilitarian benefit therefrom. It is anticipated that the top or lid of the container base, could simply lift off, or that it could be joined to the lower portion of the base
5 by hinges, clips, tongue and groove or any other means of attachment, that is, the lid could be gravity-set only, magnetic, hinged, or could employ any other appropriate means of closure. It is also contemplated that the closure mechanism for the lid could enable secure closure such that a user could lift
10 the device via the mounted figure or statue without simultaneously opening the lid.

Any number of container and lid sizes, as well as styles, are envisioned, in order to accommodate unlimited types of
15 interchangeable award components, wherein interchangeable statues, cups, sculptures and figurines, or figures, are removably attached to the base's lid.

It is anticipated that the combination award base and
20 concealed storage container device of the present invention could be combined with useful desk accessories, such as an ink pen. It is also anticipated that the combination award base and concealed storage container device of the present invention could be combined with a bookend that is in the shape of an
25 inverted "T", wherein an upright book support member extends upwardly from a generally centered position on a horizontal base. This inverted "T" configuration enables a first section

of the horizontal base to slide under books and a second section to slide into or under, and/or otherwise attach to the combination award base and concealed storage container device. Thus, because the container base can be attached to either side
5 of the bookend, the bookend container trophy is reversible, further increasing its functionality.

A feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide bases for the award/trophy industry that are
10 attractive and functional; that is, the present invention introduces a functional dimension to the established award/trophy industry.

Another feature and advantage of the present invention is
15 its ability to provide another purpose to trophies consisting of statues, trophy cups, sculptures, figures, and the like in addition to recognizing the recipient for some achievement.

Another feature and advantage of the present invention is
20 its ability to incorporate the functional aspects of a container or box into a standard award or trophy base.

Another feature and advantage of the present invention is that it provides container bases that support different types,
25 shapes and configurations of already existing interchangeable statues, cups, sculptures, figures, and the like.

Still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to facilitate the creation of a *functional and attractive display, which promotes the sale of award items.*

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Another feature and advantage of the present invention is that it *provides attractive, practical award items* configured as a useful desk accessory, *such as an interchangeable figure with an ink pen, mounted on a container or box base.*

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Still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to provide *attractive, keepsake storage containers for medallions, pins, ribbons and other special items.*

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Yet another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to enable an individual to retain related memorabilia, award pins, medallions, photos or any selected mementos and/or artifacts in proximity to an award.

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Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of the storage compartment to remain closed during handling via the figure or statue, irrespective of the contents stored therewithin.

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Still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to *provide a storage system and book holder system which are economical and simple to manufacture.*

5 Yet still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to *change what is viewed by some as the liability of a static trophy into the asset of a container and/or bookend.*

10 Yet another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to *provide a system for storing objects that can accommodate different, already existing, interchangeable statues, cups, figures, and the like, without requiring their modification and without diminishing the award's overall appeal.*

15 Yet still another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to *create components that are interchangeable and can be easily removed for relocation and re-attachment.*

20 Another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to *display a particular award feature and to concurrently store memorabilia.*

25 These and other objects, features and advantages of the invention will become more apparent to one skilled in the art

from the following description and claims when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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The present invention will be better understood by reading the Detailed Description of the Preferred and Alternate Embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawing figures, in which like reference numerals denote similar structure and
10 refer to like elements throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1A is a side perspective view of a combination award base and concealed storage container device according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, showing a
15 generally cubic storage container in a closed position;

FIG. 1B is a side perspective view of the combination award base and concealed storage container device of **FIG. 1A**, showing the generally cubic storage container with the lid removed;

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FIG. 2A is a side perspective view of a combination award base and concealed storage container device according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention, showing a generally egg-shaped storage container in a closed position;

FIG. 2B is a side perspective view of the combination award base and concealed storage container device of **FIG. 2A**, showing the generally egg-shaped storage container with the lid removed;

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FIG. 3A is a side perspective view of a combination award base and concealed storage container device according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention, showing an ink pen desk accessory storage container in a closed position;

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FIG. 3B is a side perspective view of the combination award base and concealed storage container device of **FIG. 3A**, showing the ink pen desk accessory storage container with the lid removed;

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FIG. 4A is a side perspective view of an inverted T-shaped bookend base member;

FIG. 4B is a side perspective view of the inverted T-shaped bookend base member of **FIG. 4A** in position proximate combination award base and concealed storage container device according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4C is a partial cutaway perspective view of the inverted T-shaped bookend base member of **FIGS. 4A** and **4B**, depicting its slidable relationship with combination award base and concealed storage container device;

FIG. 5A is an overhead perspective view of a combination award base and concealed storage container device according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention, showing the
5 generally cubic storage container with an open, hinged lid;

FIG. 5B is an overhead perspective view of the combination award base and concealed storage container device of FIG. 5A, showing a cubic storage container in a closed position;

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FIG. 6A is an overhead perspective view of a combination award base and concealed storage container device according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention, showing a
generally cubic storage container without a trophy display mount
15 and with the magnetically seated, inset lid removed; and

FIG. 6B is a perspective view of the combination award base and concealed storage container device of FIG. 6A, showing the generally cubic storage container in a closed position.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED AND ALTERNATE EMBODIMENTS

To the full extent permitted by law, the present Patent Cooperation Treaty Application claims priority to and the
25 benefit of United States Provisional patent application entitled "Award Bases Configured as Containers/Boxes," filed on February 2, 2004, having assigned Serial No. 60/541,383.

In describing the preferred and alternate embodiments of the present invention, as illustrated in the figures and/or described herein, specific terminology is employed for the sake of clarity. The invention, however, is not intended to be limited to the specific terminology so selected, and it is to be understood that each specific element includes all technical equivalents that operate in a similar manner to accomplish similar functions.

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Referring now to **FIGS. 1A** and **1B**, the present invention in its preferred form is Combination Award Base and Concealed Storage Container Device 10 having a three-dimensional configuration preferably reminiscent of a traditional trophy 12. In the preferred embodiment, base 20 of trophy 12 is generally cubic.

It is important to understand that the present invention is suitable for utilization with any shaped base 20 and with any type of award display, such as, for exemplary purposes only, figure F, statue S, and cup C; therefore, while the device of the present invention is described conveniently with the preferred utilization as a generally cubic-shaped, figure display trophy, it is not limited to such application or implementation. That is, for example, alternate three-dimensional configurations for base 20 could include, for example, an egg-shaped design as depicted in **FIGS. 2A** and **2B**, a

cylindrically-shaped design (not shown), or any other desirable shape suitable for receiving and storing memorabilia and the like, and for mounting award and/or decorative displays thereon. Further, there is virtually no limitation as to the types of
5 displays that could be mounted to lid 40.

Preferably, base 20 is formed from molded plastic, thereby maintaining an economical, lightweight structure capable of supporting lid 40 bearing statue S, cup C, figure F, or the
10 like, and also enabling the effective simulation of ceramic, marble, wood, or any other desirable finish as may be found on a traditional trophy base. Although plastic is preferred, base 20 could alternately be manufactured from any suitable variety of materials such as, but not limited to, plastic, acrylic, wood,
15 metal, foam, glass, resin or composite.

Preferably, base 20 has front wall 22, first side wall 24, rear wall 26, and second side wall 28, wherein said walls 22, 24, 26 and 28 support lid 40 and define interior storage space
20 30. Front wall 22 has bottom edge 22a and top edge 22b; first side wall 24 has bottom edge 24a and top edge 24b; rear wall 26 has bottom edge 26a (not shown) and top edge 26b; and second side wall 28 has bottom edge 28a and top edge 28b, wherein bottom edges 22a, 24a, 26a and 28a are preferably proximate
25 support member 60.

Lid 40 is preferably removable, thereby enabling access to interior storage space 30. One skilled in the art would readily recognize that lid 40 could alternately be hingedly related to first and second side walls 24 or 28, respectively, or, as shown in FIG. 5A, could be hingedly related to rear wall 26 via hinge 42, or a combination thereof, to permit access to interior storage space 30. One skilled in the art would readily recognize that hinge 42 could be any type or style of pivotal mechanism, such as, for exemplary purposes only, a simple pin support or any other suitable mechanism.

Additionally, lid 40 could magnetically seat via plurality of magnetic members 44 on ledge 46, as depicted in FIG. 6A. Although a variety of different types of configurations for lid 40 are anticipated, the preferred embodiment maximizes the concealed nature of lid 40 in order to maintain complete appeal as a traditional trophy. However, a variety of alternate embodiments could be configured with exposed hinges or other lid arrangements, if desired, wherein the storage benefit would continue to be imparted, but the concealed nature thereof would be diminished and/or eliminated.

In the preferred embodiment, lid 40 defines central mounting aperture 52, shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B, to provide for attachment of figure F, statue S, cup C, or any desired display article A to base 20. Preferably, bolt 54, shown in FIG. 5A, is utilized to removably secure figure F, statue S, cup C, or other

desired display article A to lid 40, whereby base 20 could be displayed with a first article and subsequently displayed with a second article. Preferably, base 20 is configured to enable retrofit with standard display article A, figure F, statue S, and/or cup C, thus enabling a user to replace a previously received trophy/award with utilitarian combination award base and concealed storage container device 10.

Specifically referring to **FIGS. 1A** and **1B**, the preferred embodiment of combination award base and concealed storage container device 10 defines base 20 in as generally cubic storage container 80, wherein preferred perimeter 32 of interior storage space 30, as defined by front wall 22, first side wall 24, rear wall 26, and second side wall 28, is smaller than the diameters of support member 60 and lid 40. Also preferably, lid 40 is defined with generally flat surface member 48 and peripheral edge 50, wherein peripheral edge 50 preferably defines interior perimeter 52 (not shown) that facilitates the preferred seating of lid 40 in such a manner that surface member 48 is positioned proximate top edges 22b, 24b, 26b, and 28b of walls 22, 24, 26 and 28, respectively, and peripheral edge 50 extends therebelow, concealing the accessway to interior storage space 30.

One skilled in the art would readily recognize that base 20 could define other prismatic shapes. Further, figure F could be any type of award display. Preferably, plate member 90 is

provided to enable personalized inscription, such as a recipient's name, team, date, and/or any desirable information. Alternately, plate member 90 could bear a generic inscription, such as, for exemplary purposes only, "The Best", "#1," or "The
5 World's Greatest..."

Referring now to FIGS. 2A and 2B, in an alternate embodiment, combination award base and concealed storage container device 10 could define generally egg-shaped storage
10 container 100, wherein alternate lid 102 could be generally dome-shaped.

Referring now to FIGS. 3A and 3B, in another alternate embodiment, combination award base and concealed storage
15 container device 10 could include ink pen desk accessory storage container lid 110, whereby additional utilitarian features are provided. One skilled in the art should readily recognize that ink pen desk accessory storage container lid 110 could be alternately arranged, for example, with a pen and a pencil, or
20 with other features, such as a tape dispenser or any other desirable desk accessory.

FIGS. 4A, 4B and 4C show another alternate embodiment, wherein combination award base and concealed storage container
25 device 10 is combined with inverted T-shaped bookend base member 120 to add yet another utilitarian feature. The dimensions of inverted T-shaped bookend base member 120 enable a slidable

relationship with base 20, whereby utilization is enabled for either end of a bookcase. One skilled in the art should readily recognize that inverted T-shaped bookend base member 120 could be alternately configured, wherein upright member 122 could be eliminated, and base portion 124 could be configured to function alone, utilizing combination award base and concealed storage container device 10 as the book supporter. Upright member 122 could be formed from transparent material to reduce visibility thereof, or, upright member 122 could be dimensioned to provide for general concealment proximate combination award base and concealed storage container device 10.

As depicted in **FIGS. 5A** and **5B**, in another alternate embodiment, lid 130 could include tabs 134, wherein tabs 134 could be dimensioned to seat within notches 132 in base 20. Tabs 134 can be utilized to assist a user in opening base 20, irrespective of whether standard display article A, figure F, statue S, and/or cup C are mounted thereon. Further, hinge 42 could be provided. Additionally, magnetic support structures 136 could be provided to support plurality of magnets 44, whereby secure closure of base 20 would be facilitated, and whereby unintentional opening of base 20 would be minimized and/or prevented.

In the preferred use, combination award base and concealed storage container device 10 is utilized to display article A, figure F, statue S, and/or cup C atop base 20, and essentially

concealed therewithin, interior storage space 30 is utilized to retain memorabilia or any other selected object(s).

In an alternate embodiment, display article A, figure F, statue S, and/or cup C holder A, could be integrally or otherwise permanently associated with lid 40, such as, for exemplary purposes only, via adhesives.

In another alternate embodiment, hinged lid 130 could have a spring-type latch, enabling a user to press down on lid 130 to disengage the spring-type latch closure mechanism.

Having thus described exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it should be noted by those skilled in the art that the within disclosures are exemplary only, and that various other alternatives, adaptations, and modifications may be made within the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the present invention is not limited to the specific embodiments illustrated herein, but is limited only by the following claims.